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### PSC 341.01: Political Parties and Elections

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## **Political Parties and Elections**

University of Montana  
Political Science 341  
MWF 10:10 – 11:00; LA 337  
Spring 2009

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Office Hours: MWF 11-12

### **Course Description**

No discussion of American politics can go too far before political parties begin to intrude. Indeed, as E.E. Schattsneider wrote: “Modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties.” Yet while they are a central feature of the American political system, parties are more elusive and difficult to study than other well-bounded institutions like Congress or the Presidency. Even definitions of “political party” are contested. Nonetheless, in a country marked by vast socio-economic, ethnic, and religious diversity, as well as fragmentation of power across branches and levels of government, parties play a central role in providing linkages. They connect voters to each other, link voters to elected officials, and bind elected officials to one another both within and across branches and levels of government. The ways in which political parties do these things has evolved in fascinating ways. This course will explore the origin, development, importance, and consequences of political parties in the United States. In addition, with the 2008 presidential election recently concluded, we will analyze the parties’ nominating processes and the general election, as well as the recent congressional elections. Among other things, this task involves analyzing voter participation and behavior.

### **Readings**

Many of our readings will be posted on the course’s Blackboard website. These readings are designated on the syllabus as: “(BB).” Contact me if you are not familiar with Blackboard. The Larry Bartles article can be accessed on the internet at the address listed on this syllabus. In addition, three books are required:

1. John Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
2. L. Sandy Maisel, ed., *The Parties Respond: Changes in American Parties and Campaigns*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Westview Press, 2002). Readings from this collection are designated on the syllabus as: “(Maisel).”
3. James W. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch, and John J. Pitney, Jr., *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics* (Roman & Littlefield, 2009).

Gerring and Maisel can be purchased at the University Bookstore. Due to its recent release date, Ceaser, et al. is not available at the University Bookstore and must be ordered online.

In addition, students are required to read those news stories dealing with American political parties in a national newspaper such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*.

The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or alter course readings as needed.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Participation (including presentation):	20%

Exams: Exams 1 and 2 will be administered in class on February 27 and March 27. The Final Exam will be held on Wednesday, May 13 from 10:10 – 12:10. Exams may include a combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Makeup exams will only be permitted if I have been notified *prior* to the missed exam and only if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency. Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have anything that conflicts with the exams.

Paper: Students will write a 6 to 8 page double-spaced research paper with 1-inch margins and standard 12 point font about an American presidential election. More information about the research paper will be given in class. Papers are due in class on Friday, May 8. Extensions will be available only for illness or serious family circumstance, and then only with *advance* permission. Papers will be marked down half a letter grade for each day they are late.

Participation: Much of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings in a seminar-style. Consequently, both quantity and quality of class participation will be very important. Students are expected to do all of the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken and factored into participation grades. Students missing more than ¼ of our class meetings will not pass the course. In addition, each student will give one formal 10 to 15 minute class presentation utilizing Power Point on the presidential election s/he is researching and writing a paper on. Further details about the presentations will be provided in class.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	below 60 F
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

\*\*\*\* All three exams and the paper must be completed in order to pass the course.\*\*\*\*

## **Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at <http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>. I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

## **DSS Students**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations. Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the first exam. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **PART I: DEFINING POLITICAL PARTIES**

#### **Week 1, Jan. 26 – 30: Introduction: What are Parties?**

- (a) David Hume, “Of Parties in General” (BB)
- (b) Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, paragraphs 1.1.141-48 and 1.1.151 (BB)
- (c) Woodrow Wilson, “Wanted – A Party” (BB)
- (d) John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) Chap. 1 (BB)

#### **Week 2, Feb. 2 – 6: A Comparative Perspective on Political Parties**

- (a) David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) Chapter 1 (BB)
- (b) Giovanni Sartori, “A Typology of Party Systems,” in *The West European Party System*, Peter Mair, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1990) (BB)

#### **Week 3, Feb. 9 – 13: State and National Party Organizations**

- (a) John F. Bibby, “State Party Organizations: Strengthening and Adapting to Candidate-Centered Politics and Nationalization” (Maisel)
- (b) Bruce E. Cain and Megan Mullin, “Competing for Attention and Votes: The Role of State Parties in Setting Presidential Nomination Rules” (Maisel)
- (c) Paul S. Herrnson, “National Party Organizations at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century” (Maisel)

## **PART II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM**

### **Week 4, Feb. 18 – 20: The Origins of the American Party System, Part I**

- (a) Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (University of California Press, 1969), Chapter 2 (BB)
- (b) James Madison, *Federalist* #10 (BB)
- (c) George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 1796 (BB)
- (d) Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address” (BB)
- (e) Alexis de Tocqueville, “Parties in the United States,” *Democracy in America* (Book 1, Chapter 10) (BB)

### **Week 5, Feb. 23 – 27: The Origins of the American Party System, Part II**

#### **\*\*\*\*Exam #1: Friday, February 27\*\*\*\***

- (a) John Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, Chapters 1-2
- (b) Joel H. Silbey, “From ‘Essential to the Existence of our Institutions’ to ‘Rapacious Enemies of Honest and Respectable Government’: The Rise and Fall of American Political Parties, 1790-2000” (Maisel)

### **Week 6, Mar. 2 – 6: The Development of the Whig/Republican Party, Part I**

- (a) Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, Chapter 3
- (b) George Packer, “The Fall of Conservatism: Have the Republicans Run Out of Ideas?,” *The New Yorker*, May 28, 2008 (BB)

### **Week 7, Mar. 9 – 13: The Development of the Whig/Republican Party, Part II**

- 2) Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, Chapter 4
- 3) Nicol Rae, *Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans* (Oxford University Press, 1989), pgs. 25-45, 78-87, 118-21 (BB)

### **Week 8, Mar. 16 – 20: The Development of the Democratic Party, Part I**

- (a) Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, Chapters 5-6
- (b) Nicol Rae, *Southern Democrats*, (Oxford University Press, 1994), Chapter 1 (BB)

### **Week 9, Mar. 23 – 27: The Development of the Democratic Party, Part II**

#### **\*\*\*\*Exam #2: Friday, March 27\*\*\*\***

- (a) Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, Chapter 7
- (b) Thomas Byrne Edsall, “The Old and New Democratic Parties,” in Peter Berkowitz ed., *Varieties of Progressivism* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004) (BB)
- (c) William Galston, “Incomplete Victory: The Rise of the New Democrats,” in *Varieties of Progressivism* (BB)

### **Spring Break, Mar. 30 – Apr. 3**

### **PART III: PARTIES AND ELECTIONS**

#### **Week 10, Apr. 6 – 10: Party Identification and Voting**

- (a) Warren E. Miller, "Party Identification and the Electorate at the Start of the Twenty-First Century" (Maisel)
- (b) James W. Ceaser and Robert P. Saldin, "A New Measure of Party Strength," *Political Research Quarterly* 58:2 (2005), 245-56 (BB)
- (c) Larry M. Bartels, "The Irrational Electorate," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 2008)  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay\\_id=478918](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=478918)

#### **Week 11, Apr. 13 – 17: Partisan Regimes and Electoral Realignment**

- (a) Walter Dean Burnham, "Party Systems and the Political Process," in *The American Party Systems: Stages of Development*, Burnham and William Nisbet Chambers, eds. (Oxford University Press, 1967) (BB)
- (b) David Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), 449-74 (BB)
- (c) David Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre* (Yale University Press, 2004), pgs. 156-65 (BB)
- (d) Elizabeth Sanders, "In Defense of Realignment and Regimes," *Polity* (2005) (BB)

#### **Week 12, Apr. 20 – 24: Presidential Nominations and Campaigns**

- (a) James W. Ceaser, *Presidential Selection* (Princeton University Press, 1979), Introduction (BB)
- (b) Nelson W. Polsby, *The Consequences of Party Reform* (Oxford University Press, 1983), Part I (BB)
- (c) Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "The Invisible Primary in Presidential Nominations, 1980-2004," in *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008*, William G. Mayer, ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) (BB)
- (d) Larry J. Sabato, "Politics: America's Missing Constitutional Link," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Summer 2006 (BB)

#### **Week 13, Apr. 27 – May 1: Analyzing Campaign 2008, Part I**

- (a) James W. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch, and John J. Pitney, *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics*, Chapters TBA

#### **Week 14, May 4 – 8: Analyzing Campaign 2008, Part II**

**\*\*\*\*Paper Due: Friday, May 8, in class\*\*\*\***

- (a) Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, *Epic Journey*, Chapters TBA

**Final Exam: Wednesday, May 13, 10:10 – 12:10.**